

From: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP)
Sent: 6/15/2015 10:43:56 AM
To: Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP); Hedman, Susan [hedman.susan@epa.gov]; Hyde, Tinka [hyde.tinka@epa.gov]; Burdett, Cheryl [burdett.cheryl@epa.gov]; Maraldo, Dean [Maraldo.Dean@epa.gov]
CC: Russell A. - DNR Rasmussen [russell.rasmussen@wisconsin.gov]; Preston Cole [preston.cole@milwaukee.gov]; Laurie J. - DNR Ross [laurie.ross@wisconsin.gov]; Dawson Thomas J. [dawsontj@doj.state.wi.us]; william.cosh@wisconsin.gov
Subject: Citizens living with Water Contamination
Attachments: Groundwater Collaboration Group Agenda 5_26_15.docx

Mick, there has now been 3 meetings conducted by the DNR. These meetings are a direct response to the Safe Drinking Water Act Petition filed in October 2014.

The first meeting took place in OshKosh February 4, 2015 which included several agencies including the DNR, EPA, NRCS, DATCP, USGS, local leaders, & conservation departments from Door and Kewaunee. The Door County Health department sent Rhonda Kohlberg, while our **Kewaunee health department did not have a representative present!**

The second meeting took place at Ex. 6 Personal Privacy (PP) CAFO on March 31, 2015 with "14 of the 15 CAFO operators", the DNR and EPA. There was **no sign in sheet** of participants in that meeting, which is highly questionable, since one would assume *there is protocol* for a "DNR led" meeting. The meetings which took place on Feb. 4th, and May 26th, both had sign in sheets. Several DNR employee's were present at that meeting, and an EPA representative. Unfortunately that meeting was cloaked in secrecy from our local leadership, including Davina at the Land and Water Department, and several key leaders working on these water issues, such as Lee Luft, County Board member & Chair of the Water task force committee. Again, with no sign in sheets--we do know that it was a meeting of **only a portion of operators from the agricultural community**, and included the **DBA**, Dairy Business Association. With larger farms, leadership & entities such as the DBA, continuing to implicate small farms as the real cause of the problem, we, as farmers ourselves, find this closed dialogue within the farming community a detriment to an open discussion and bringing in the full scope of the farming operations here--both large and small--and contributions and practices resulting in pollution and water contamination in our county.

The six petitioning groups met with multiple DNR employees and 2 EPA representatives in OshKosh on May 26, 2015. Two of the key issues that came forth out of that meeting was that getting water to those in need is the #1 priority, and that Enforcement on these issues is #2. Here is the DNR statement released on May 27th. **Unfortunately, there is no mention of "enforcement"**, which we know is a major element in the continued water pollution problems here, resulting in citizens **repetitively exposed to practices that poison and contaminate** our water and homes.

Here is the DNR statement.

(paste of DNR statement)

Addressing Ground Water Issues in Kewaunee County

Kewaunee County contains areas known as "karst" which is fractured bedrock that provide conduits for pollutants from the surface to the groundwater. These pollutants can, in turn, be taken up in private drinking water wells, causing the water to be unsafe to drink, or for other household uses such as cooking or bathing. While karst areas are common throughout the eastern, and southern parts of Wisconsin, and along the

Mississippi River, the susceptibility of this geology to groundwater contamination is dependent on several factors, including soil type and depth.

Kewaunee and Door Counties have areas where the soil depth over the karst geology is thin, creating increased risk of groundwater and well contamination. The most common sources of these pollutants may be from agricultural fields, or septic systems. Wells constructed with inadequate casing may also be more susceptible to contamination.

In October 2014, several groups from Kewaunee County and elsewhere requested that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) look into the causes of well contamination occurrences in Kewaunee County. The request faulted the number of concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) in the county as the overwhelming causal factor of the contamination. It should be noted that a study of 10 private drinking water wells cited in the request found that two wells were contaminated by bovine bacteria, two by human bacteria and one by both.

EPA and DNR discussed the request and what approaches might be undertaken, and decided that both agencies would work together to address the situation with DNR taking the lead role.

DNR gathered staff from within the agency with expertise in hydrology, drinking water well construction, CAFO spill response, nutrient management planning and agricultural conservation. The group met several times in November and December 2014 to craft a preliminary response approach and then met again with EPA to garner feedback.

In February, 2015, the DNR facilitated a meeting of the various governmental agencies that had an interest or could bring assistance to this issue. These included Kewaunee and Door County supervisors and land conservation staff, DNR, EPA, Department of Health Services (DHS), Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), US Geological Survey (USGS), Wisconsin Geologic and Natural History Survey (WGNHS), and US Natural Resources conservation Service (NRCS). The purpose of this meeting was to share and compare perspectives and approaches, and identify available resources and expertise.

One of the attendees of the February meeting was a Kewaunee County Board supervisor who is also a CAFO operator. During the discussion it was decided that a meeting of the CAFO operators in Kewaunee County would be warranted. The meeting was held in March, 2015 at the CAFO operator's farm and included DNR staff, EPA, representative from the Kewaunee County Board of Supervisors and many of the Kewaunee County CAFO operators. DNR made the same presentation of its proposed approach as at the February meeting and solicited ideas, input and participation by the CAFO operators in finding solutions to the issue of well contamination in susceptible karst areas.

In May, 2015, DNR and EPA held a meeting with the groups that had made the request for EPA to look into the issue. DNR again presented its proposed approach and solicited input and participation.

The outcome of this series of meetings is to establish workgroups to consider and provide recommendations on the most pertinent topics to be addressed. These include short term solutions to provide owners of contaminated wells with safe drinking water, identifying karst areas susceptible to groundwater contamination, determining agricultural and other best management practices to significantly reduce the risk of groundwater contamination in these areas, and determining what monitoring or other research-type efforts might assist in further identifying solutions. Participants on these workgroups will include representatives from all the groups involved in the meetings so far, and may include other interests such as local municipalities and industry. These meetings will be set up to start in June 2015 as schedules and availability allow.

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unfortunately the disenfranchised residents who live with contaminated water--continue to be the voices that are **not** part of the discussion on these issues. It is unfortunate that those who so acutely know the reality of living with water contamination-- DAILY-- have yet to be heard.

I hope this information is helpful as the process moves forward in attempts to address what is going on where you live in the Town of Lincoln, and the rest of Kewaunee County. I have attached the DNR "Groundwater Collaboration Group" agenda from our May 26 meeting.

I am passing this email on to DNR and EPA leadership, who have been negligent in hearing the voices of those who most desperately need to be heard, like yourself-- those living with contaminated wells, plunging home values, health issues and a continuing diminishing quality of life.

Moving forward, leadership from these agencies need to recognize and **prioritize** the importance of listening to those most impacted by practices that destroy water quality, poison and pollute our families and homes.

Until this discussion takes place, the discussion has not begun.

In support,

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----- Forwarded Message -----

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Sent: Sunday, June 14, 2015 10:10 AM

Subject: Re: Channel 11

>>>The DNR provided FOX 11 with a statement. In part, it reads "we are working with citizens and other stakeholders of Kewaunee County to develop proposed actions and potential solutions to reduce risk to public health and groundwater quality."

They are? How come we don't know about the DNR "proposed actions and potential solutions" that they are working with us on?

Kewaunee County farms, DNR blamed in manure report...

1. fox11online.com/2015/06/10/kewaunee-county-farms-dnr...Cached

KEWAUNEE COUNTY – A report released Wednesday says people in Kewaunee County are living in third world conditions. It puts the blame on the county's industrial ...

KEWAUNEE COUNTY – A report released Wednesday says people in Kewaunee County are living in Third World conditions. It puts the blame on the county's industrial dairy farms and the Department of Natural Resources.

The 140-page report outlines hundreds of incidents involving 16 large dairy and beef farms in the county. Most involve manure spills, and excessive application.

- [Click here to read the full report](#)

However, farmers say they've done nothing wrong and are following state laws.

Twenty-year Kewaunee residents Scott and Deborah Kliment noticed a change near their house about a decade ago.

"The smell changed, it wasn't your grandpa's manure anymore," said Deborah Kliment.

Kliment says the smell changed the same time family farms became megafarms. In 2012, she came home to find manure all over her property, inches away from her pond.

"If it was an isolated incident I would say you know what, stuff happens, but it's not an isolated incident," said Kliment. "There are things that are happening around here all the time."

The group Socially Responsible Agricultural Project outlined similar incidents in its 140-page report. The report cites one 2013 study that found a third of the county's wells tested as unsafe.

"We have people in our community who cannot drink their water, brush their teeth, wash dishes and are fearful of bathing in their water if they have an open cut," said Lynn Utesch of Kewaunee CARES, a group that helped with the report.

The group claims the state Department of Natural Resources is partly to blame, saying it doesn't properly regulate the farms.

"What we found was a continuing pattern of very light slaps on the wrist," said Scott Dye, a field coordinator for Socially Responsible Agricultural Project.

The DNR provided FOX 11 with a statement. In part, it reads "we are working with citizens and other stakeholders of Kewaunee County to develop proposed actions and potential solutions to reduce risk to public health and groundwater quality."

"No farmer wants to pollute and indeed goes to great extremes to ensure that they are not polluting," said Lee Kinnard of Kinnard Farms, Inc., one of the farms listed in the report.

Kinnard says large dairy farms like his are held to strict regulations. Kinnard hasn't read the report, but says his farm is doing everything it can to protect its neighbors.

"Most of these family owned dairies voluntarily far exceed the regulations, just flat out because it's the right thing to do," said Kinnard.

The report also lists recommendations it would like the DNR and farms to consider.

The group behind the report says it also plans to update its findings every six months, hoping to see things improve.